



US Army Corps
of Engineers
Huntington District

Castle Comments

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Storm hits three states

Some homes eligible for Section 202 protection washed away



Photo by Steve Harris

Spring showers bring more than May flowers in McDowell County, W.Va. The Corps responds to the second flood of the year. See related article page 4.

Errant blast rocks town of Grundy

By ELIZABETH SLAGEL
Public Affairs

Blasting for the Grundy flood control redevelopment site did not go as planned April 24 as rock spewed into a portion of town damaging 45 cars, eight buildings and injuring four people.

In the interest of public safety, many Corps officials fled to the scene to determine what went wrong with the blast overseen by Bush and Burchett and subcontractors Bizzak Inc., responsible for earth moving and Austen Powder Company, responsible for explosives.

The Corps' preliminary investigation narrowed it down to three possibilities:

See blast page 11



Photo by Mike Maynard

Rock lay in the streets of part of Grundy. The project has faced many challenges from a landslide last month to an erred blast this month.

Inside this Issue



• From landslide to rock shower to out of control fire, the little town of Grundy has had its share of emergency situations in the past two months. Read about the outbreak of fire in the business district on page 6.

• Unbelievable field stories told for the truth page 8. Can you tell which ones are real?



• New faces are likely to appear as Engineering and Construction readies for loss of most knowledgeable engineers. See page 12.



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Smiles out to



Helma German, Jean Read, Neisha Blevins, Sharanna Romans and Mark Kessinger participated in the Cabell County Career Fair May 7- 9 at the Veterans Memorial Fieldhouse. German, Read and Blevins presented information on careers in Safety and Romans and Kessinger discussed engineering. This is the 13th consecutive year the district has participated in the event which presents information on a wide variety of careers to every fifth grader in the county.

Commander's Corner

Selfless service deserves recognition



By COL JOHN RIVENBURGH
District Engineer

Our April 19 award's ceremony was a special day for our district team. Recognition is good and I am thankful for the great efforts of the folks who prepared the awards.

The de Fleury Medal is a special form of recognition and I was very proud to be part of the ceremony. We recognized the collective efforts of eight great Americans who have contributed over 250 years of service to the citizens of our nation. Frank Matthews, Jerry Phelps, Mickey Phillips, Russ Whitten, Norm Spero, Ginny Lares, Mike Spoor and Billy Randolph truly exemplify the seven Army Values we all subscribe to. It was also extra special to have their families present, because support at home is necessary for extraordinary success at work.

We also recognized a significant number of teams, which is noteworthy. Folks working together for a greater good is how we do our business. Our flood fighters are a great example of this. Emergency Operations, debris removal, demolition, emergency power and emergency housing teams carried out missions for the citizens of West Virginia with the help of USACE folks from around the nation.

Awards do not just appear. Each and every award has an advocate. The advocate recognizes the accomplishment and then does something about it. Be it a performance type award or a special act; Federal Women's Program or deFleury Medal; a chief, team leader or even a co-worker may put together an award recommendation. We process it through the chain of command and present the award at an appropriate time. Please remember that it does take time and energy to make it happen, but we will make it happen if you put forth the effort.

McDowell County, WV, Pike and Martin County, Ky. and Buchanan County, Va. were hit by significant flooding on May 3. As always, our district team did exactly what was needed. Our Emergency Operations Center was activated, our floodwall experts deployed to ensure gates were closed and pumps worked, our lake projects managed water flow based on our Water Control Section's data and our planners went out and did initial assessments. While this was happening, our housing team was getting ready to go and logistics was looking into their crystal ball to figure out how to house all the folks who will deploy to the impacted area. Once again you all have done yourself proud. Our Corps of Engineers is truly second to none when it comes to selfless service and responding to the needs of our nation. There is no greater honor than serving as Huntington District Commander.

Editorial

de Fleury's deserving

By STEVE WRIGHT
Public Affairs

Nine members of the Huntington District recently took the stage at the last town hall meeting to receive the de Fleury Medal from District Commander Col. John Rivenburgh. The selection process of these eight was not subject to complicated nomination and justification from supervisors, but from Col. Rivenburgh's personal knowledge of these individuals. He could not have made better choices.

The new de Fleury Medal recipients are Frank Matthews, Jerry Phelps, Russ Whitten, Mike Spoor, Billy Randolph, Ginny Lares, Norm Spero and Mickey Phillips. The members of this group represent us all and make us proud. They have years of dedicated and quality service to the Huntington

District of the US Army Corps of Engineers.

The de Fleury Medal is the first American medal awarded by Congress in 1779. It is named after its first recipient Francois Louis Tesseidre de Fleury, who was instrumental in an American Revolutionary victory at Stony Point, N. Y. Individuals who receive this medal have significantly contributed to Army Engineering and the Army Corps of Engineers.

Grundy enduring town

By STEVE WRIGHT
Public Affairs

Grundy amazes me. I arrived in Grundy the day after rock from an errant Corps contractor blast had rained rock down on the town. Col. John Rivenburgh, Al Branch and I visited buildings that sustained the most damage and talked with those people who were there when rocks

came though their roofs and turned out their lights. Not one person was angry. Not one person was less than polite. Not one person asked why this happened.

The people of Grundy have been tested this year. Beginning with a former law student from Appalachian School of Law killing seven people and himself, to the blasting incident, to a main street fire which demolished two buildings and four businesses. Fortunately, the Corps contractor Bush and Burchett, was able to help the Grundy Fire Department contain the Main Street fire by demolishing part of a building and creating a fire break or most of the town would have burned to the ground.

We are fortunate to work to help bring flood protection to these great and good Americans. They deserve our help. They are so resilient in the face of adversity. I am humbled by the people of Grundy, Va.

Grayson project exemplifies support to Army

By WAYNE RIGOR
Resource Manager, Grayson Lake

The Corps of Engineers has long supported the U.S. Army in a wide variety of ways. For the past ten years, that support manifested itself in a series of real life training exercises and opportunities at Grayson Lake.

To show the Corps' appreciation, Resource Manager Wayne Rigor presented a Corps flag to Staff Sgt. Greg McFarlin, Operations NCO for the 478 Engineer Reserves Battalion of Ashland Ky. Sgt. at his request for the battalion's display unit. Over the years, Grayson Lake and the 478th have developed a win/win working relationship of partnering on numerous training projects. The 478th has a very real and urgent need of areas for realistic training exercises where their soldiers can gain "stick time" on heavy equipment, and to gain and maintain operational proficiencies a series of other occupations. The

Corps has a constant need for infrastructure repair, replacement or rehabilitation, but much of their needs would be cost prohibitive by going with commercial contractors.

The relationship began with simply providing bivwac areas for overnight camping. As the needs and missions of the engineer battalion changed, Grayson Lake filled those needs by carefully planning and scheduling major training opportunities on project lands.

Rigor estimates that the reserves have preformed an estimated \$250,000 worth of service the past 10 years. Some training opportunities included rebuilding a critical foot bridge (shown in background of photos) that permitted reopening a closed two-and-half mile hiking trail; performing erosion control on a National Register Nature trail that saved a historic 200 year old tree critical for environmental education; clearing or rebuilding miles of forest fire and wildlife management road or trails; and countless smaller projects.

The only thing the Engineers have asked for in return were two things: Corps of Engineers baseball caps, and

a Corps flag. The Engineer unit has since branched out to also provide similar assistance to other nearby Corps projects like Yatesville Lake and Greenup Dam, in addition to state agencies that operate and maintain thousands of acres on Corps projects. This is an example of a very successful symbiotic relationship that demonstrates the Corps of Engineers Huntington District real life "Support to the Army".



Wayne Rigor presents Staff Sgt. Greg McFarlin with a Corps flag.

Tug Fork River reaches Williamson floodwall for first time

Section 202 offers hope

By **ELIZABETH SLAGEL**
Public Affairs

Heavy spring rain and rugged terrain are a mix for disastrous conditions as is proven again following the latest flood situation in southern West Virginia, eastern Kentucky and parts of Virginia.

The predominantly unprotected town of Welch and other communities in McDowell County, W.Va. fell hardest to Mother Nature this time with record flooding that in some places was worse than last July's flood by an estimated three to five feet.

Planning Branch's Gene Barr, who works with the Section 202 Program, aimed at protecting such areas, reported that the town of Welch was nearly destroyed. "Langraff as a community is gone. We saw people and the National Guard just dumping stuff out."

Barr assessed that flooding upstream of the Tug Fork River and tributaries like Elkhorn Creek actually surpassed both the 1977 and July floods. Downstream of



Photo by Steve Harris

The sole floodproofed home in McDowell County withstood the May flood as neighboring homes were inundated with floodwater.

Welch did not appear to be flood of records.

Interestingly, the Corps had just introduced the nonstructural 202 floodproofing program to McDowell County residents and businesses in 2000, but failed to get much response. To date, only one home is floodproofed with four in the process and some 350 more eligible, that is if the recent flood didn't condemn or wash away their

home, Barr said.

Steve Harris, also of Planning who helped document the flood, said the sole floodproofed residence in McDowell County held up very well. "The house was solid. There didn't appear to be any structural damage. It held up the way we wanted it to."

The rest of McDowell County wasn't as fortunate. The water just kind of made its own route, Barr



Photo by Steve Harris

Residents survey the damage to homes left standing in Landgraft, a small community in McDowell County. Many homes literally washed away.

said. "You saw a lot of houses on hills flooded out that weren't even close to the streams. Instead, they were affected by flooded ravines (otherwise known as gully washers)."

"It was kind of weird stuff. Typically you see a stream come up and flood both sides. This, the water didn't necessarily stay within the stream, but formed its own route."

That type of overflow was the result of four to five inches of rainfall within a six hour period in a rugged terrain, according to Hydrologist Victor Pratt. "This kind of rainfall isn't necessarily unusual. What is unusual is having two flood of records in less than a year," he said.

The other unique part of this storm was that it occurred over a three-state area, which includes dealing with three different divisions of FEMA, according to



Photo by Steve Harris
People wonder the streets of Welch, a town said to be hit hardest by the May flood.



Photo by Steve Harris
Many houses like this one would have been eligible for floodproofing, but were destroyed instead.

Emergency Operations Center's Carl Miller.

At press time, the EOC was activated and awaiting duties from FEMA which are thought to be replays of last July: housing, debris and demolition. Teams and administrative staff were being assembled to handle the mission.

According to Miller's May 6 report, West Virginia suffered hundreds of destroyed homes with five confirmed fatalities and several communities without water supply. In Kentucky, one person was reported dead with 49 homes

completely destroyed. In Virginia, 14 bridges were out in Buchanan County and one person confirmed dead with two missing and the little town of Hurley nearly destroyed.

"The district recommended and division concurred that Nashville take care of emergency operations in Virginia since Huntington would have its hands full with West Virginia," Miller added.

On a positive note, the newer floodwalls of Williamson protected both sides of the town from the Tug Fork for the first time since being in place. Pratt said the Tug Fork crested 16 feet above flood stage.

Water for the first time ever reached the floodwall, but didn't enter the city as well as in Matewan. Also for the first time, a team of engineers was sent to flooded onsite locations to help city officials manage closing their flood gates. Rick Rutherford was one who said it helped him get a good perspective of the whole process.

As for the Corps, now is the busy time as different parts of the organization deal with its many facets of the flood aftermath.



Photo by Steve Harris
Corps employees surveying the damage said this floodwater made its own route.

Corps contractor saves out of control fire



Photo by Lisa Richardson

To the left is rubble from a building Bush and Burchett had to knock down to create a fire break from adjoining buildings. The fire would have taken two other buildings on that side and seven the other direction.

By STEVE WRIGHT
Public Affairs

Grundy, Va. Fire Chief Bill Stokes attributed Bush and Burchett, a Corps of Engineers contractor, for helping stop an out of control fire that destroyed two buildings and damaged a third on Front Street, which is the main street of the town's business district. There were no injuries from the fire.

"They (Bush and Burchett) saved the day. The fire got away from us fast. We couldn't have put more water on it," said Stokes. "We talked about creating a fire break when it was clear we couldn't stop the fire."

Chuck Crabtree, Grundy Town Manager cleared tearing down a building to create a firebreak with

the town council and Bush and Burchett was standing by waiting for the go ahead to use their excavator to create the fire break. The assistance the company provided the town was purely voluntary.

"They volunteered to help us and without them, I don't know where we would be," Crabtree said. "This wasn't without danger, as we were watching the excavator work, the machine and operator fell though the floor into the basement. We thought the worst until we heard him cussing and the beep of the excavator backing up."

Bush and Burchett then brought in a second larger excavator to winch the first excavator out of the burning and damaged building. The excavator operator was unhurt and the excavator was only

slightly damaged.

Stokes, said that the fire department was pulling so much water fighting the fire that Grundy residents were without water. In spite of the best efforts to stop the fire with traditional means, Stokes said that a fire break had to be employed.

"Without the firebreak, the fire would have taken the rest of the buildings to Slate Creek," Stokes said. "Some of the buildings were old heavy timber wood, but even where there was a metal beam firewall, the heat transferred though the metal allowed the fire to jump from one building to the next," he said.

In addition to using men and equipment to create the firebreak, Bush and Burchett also set up lights to help the fire fighters and brought in two water trucks to supply more water, according to Paul Burchett, the company's project manager. "It's something we had to do," Burchett said. "We didn't even think twice, we just try to live in the world with everyone else. We try to do the right thing and the right thing was to step in

"Without the firebreak, the fire would have taken the rest of the buildings to Slate Creek."

Bill Stokes, Grundy Fire Chief

See fire page 11

Section 531 gets eight new projects

By JOHN YEAGER
Economist and PRIDE liaison

The PRIDE program, and the Corps' part in the eastern Kentucky clean-up program, continues to expand. At an April 15 press conference in London, Ky, Congressman Rogers D-Ky. announced eight new Corps Section 531 wastewater projects and five new PRIDE Super Grant dump cleanup projects. Division Commander, Brig. Gen. Steve Hawkins came from Cincinnati to hear the Congressman praise the Corps for our involvement in helping develop PRIDE and the success of new flood protection projects in the region. Also in attendance were the District Commanders from Huntington, Louisville and Nashville.

PRIDE is a grassroots effort to clean up wastewater and solid waste dumps. It's an acronym for Personal Responsibility in a Desirable Environment. Some of the highlights from PRIDE's report card are:

- 247,000 students involved
 - \$66.8 million in NOAA funds
 - \$16.4 million in Corps funds
 - \$31 million EPA funds
 - 18,559 homes no longer polluting streams with wastewater
 - 911 dumps eliminated
 - 54,000 volunteers
 - 161,000 bags of trash
 - 541,000 tires collected
- And the list goes on. The three

Corps districts involved are attacking wastewater problems in 40 communities while 13 projects are constructed. Hawkins' comments referenced several innovative projects including the trash rack above Lake Cumberland and the trash hunter vessel at Fishtrap Lake.

The new Section 531 projects and the corps funds are as follows:

- Cumberland, Harlan County - \$465,000
- Wood Creek, Laurel County - \$450,000

- Letcher County - \$450,000
- Mountain Water District, Pike County - \$54,000 (design phase)
- Martin County - \$315,000
- Booneville, Owsley County - \$296,250
- Big Creek, McCreary County - \$500,000
- Somerset, Pulaski County - \$900,000

Project sponsors are required to match these funds with 25 percent from local sources.



Photo by Dan Bailey
Division leaders to include Brig. Gen. Steve Hawkins (second from left) talk with Rep. Hal Rogers, D-Ky. at the April 15 meeting.

Professionals who keep offices going get thanked

By PEGGY NOEL
Public Affairs

The Huntington District joined offices around the world in celebrating what is the largest workplace observance in the world April 24. Administrative Professionals Day, formerly Professional Secretaries Day, was observed in the sixth floor conference room with a thank you

reception sponsored by the Federal Women's Program committee.

Huntington District Commander, Col. John Rivenburgh, welcomed the participants and expressed his appreciation for the hard work and dedication displayed by these key people of the district. He then presented the 74 team members with certificates of appreciation, and the honorees were treated to cake, cookies and other refreshments.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of Administrative Professionals Week, which celebrates half century of accomplishments by administrative assistants, secretaries and other support staff. The work today by these individuals is vastly different from that in 1952 and during the past 50 years, the

See administrative page 11

Fact Or Fiction

Did these unbelievable

By ELIZABETH SLAGEL
Public Affairs

In dealing with the public, the media and large project lands there are all kinds of unbelievable stories likely to arise. Here are a few shared by field employees.

Huge catfish at Deer Creek Lake

A diver was doing an underwater inspection at Deer Creek Lake downstream stilling basin with nearly zero visibility. While he was trying to keep his point of reference by following a crack, he came to a long obstruction several feet long.

He decided it was none other than one of those fabled catfish. The diver hit him as hard as he could. The catfish shook and raised up a little but settled right back into place. The diver said, "I guess that was his spot and he just wasn't leaving."

Was there a catfish of that nature?

Jim Noble was the diver and how big the catfish was, only he would know. Of course, Noble has 15 years experience as a diver and many underwater fish encounters to compare.

Bear on Lock Wall at Marmet

Three lockmen were gathered outside of the Marmet powerhouse when they heard a strange, clickety clack, clickety clack running down the lock wall.



They turned to see a large dark animal running toward them.

As the animal drew closer it put its paw on one of the lockmen in a gesture to step aside. The man yelled and expletive while the second lockman said, "man, what a dog." "That's not dog; it's a bear," replied the third.

All the commotion caused the startled bear to turn around and jump off the lock wall into the water.

The bear swam to roller three and tried to resurface by climbing the dam. After giving up on climbing the waterslide-like dam, the bear swam onto the hydropower plant and climbed up the trash boom and ran on into the town of Marmet.

Is this story too much to bear?

Maybe, but it's true. Eric Dolly, now at Greenup Locks and Dam, tells this story that occurred about five or six years ago while he was still working at Marmet. Dallas Thompson was the one who startled the bear into jumping off the lock wall. Freddie Middleton was the lockman who announced the animal was in fact a bear. The lockmen never saw the bear again.

Rattlesnakes stocked at Paintsville Lake

An unknown government agency concerned with enhancing conservation has for years stocked rattlesnakes at Paintsville Lake. In fact, people have witnessed this action which is usually done by air suspension. One man swore that he saw the agency lowering rattlesnakes from a helicopter.

So how do rattlesnakes survive the drop from midair?

It's likely they would not. Resource Manager Bob Beverley says this rumor resurfaces again and

again. At the onset of the rumor, calls will flood the project office demanding to know if this is true.



The Paintsville Lake Project Office has to dispel the rumor by writing an article in the local paper. One such time, the project office actually called all the conservation agencies like the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management to verify this was merely a rumor.

Conservation agencies say this is a common rumor across the eastern U.S. A likely theory is people start the rumor to keep others off certain properties, perhaps a favorite hunting spot or place where illegal plants are grown.

Four-foot fish caught at Fishtrap Lake

A man caught a 48 inch fish at the headwaters of the Fishtrap Dam. The fish was some 50 pounds.

Just another fish story?

This story is true. The fish was a flathead catfish and can be found in the visitor's center at the project. Ranger Willie Whitaker says while this fish is large, it didn't come close to the state record of 104 pounds.

Summersville Lake experiences some unpredictable visitors

In 1990, a group of Mexicans complete with full body tattoos visited the Summersville Lake Swimming Beach. Rangers were keeping an eye on the apparent troublesome group when a group of Neo-Nazi skinheads arrived as well wearing up-to-the-knee

evable field stories happen?

leather boots and vests. A ranger said one member wore a jean jacket that read (in softer terms) screw Kennedy on the front with a silk screened picture of Charles Manson on the back.

Local law enforcement and rangers were stationed at various points along the beach as the two groups exchanged words. When it was thought that the situation couldn't get any worse, a biracial couple arrived walking arm-in-arm.

Tattooed Mexicans and skinheads in West Virginia?

This story is true and one now Resource Manager C.J. Hamilton will never forget of his days as a ranger. He recalls telling the man, "Listen, you have as much right as anyone in America to come on this beach right now, and we will protect you to our full extent, but you need to understand what is going on out here." The man replied, "Brother, it's cool; we are outta here!"

As a note, the Neo Nazis left about an hour later with no major incidents. The whole episode blew everyone's mind as this was something one would expect in urban America, Hamilton said.

Midnight crewman spies unusual fish at Willow Island Locks and Dam

A lockman at Willow Island saw a peculiar fish floating in the lock chamber after a barge passed through during midnight shift. Curious, he climbed down the 15-foot narrow ladder and grabbed the dead four-foot fish to take it above for closer observation. Upon looking at it, he discovered it was a rare paddlefish.

So how does one carry a four-foot fish up one of those narrow

lock ladders in the dark?

The story is true and told by Lockmaster Dave Powell. Russell Woomer was the lockman who retrieved the rare fish that is now mounted at the project office. The crew discovered just how rare the fish was after researching it. They found that the paddlefish's eggs are in high demand for caviar and can bring \$500 per pound in some markets. The fish's decline results from overharvest and environmental factors such as the loss of spawning habitat.

Lockman rescues boater who drives recreational boat over dam

About three years ago, a pleasure craft on the Kanawha River went overtop the Marmet Dam and landed right-side up. A lockman saw the incident and ran to the nearest boat to perform a water rescue. The boat was surprisingly intact but the bottom was damaged and about to sink. The man was thrown from the boat while his dog amazingly remained aboard.

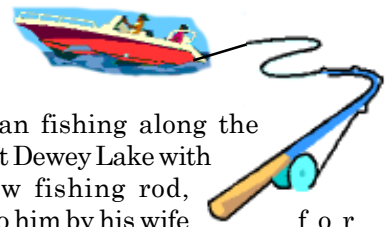
The lockman rescued the man from the water and went back for the frightened dog. Both survived the encounter and the boat was also retrieved.

How does a boat run overtop a dam?

This story did happen and it is not recommended to try this at home (or on the river rather.) Needless to say the boater was intoxicated and issued a DUI. Freddie Middleton was the heroic lockman who rescued the man, the dog and the boat. He says, the man's sister picked up the dog and

the boat. He never heard from the man again, not even to be thanked.

Fisherman with gun chases down boater who snagged his new pole



A man fishing along the shore at Dewey Lake with his new fishing rod, given to him by his wife for his birthday, became angered when another boat steered so close to shore that it snagged the rod and took off with it. The fisherman jumped into his boat and chased the offending boater down.

A Dewey ranger on boat patrol saw the action and managed to get in between the two boats. At which time, he discovered the angered fisherman had a pistol. The young ranger managed to resolve the situation by convincing the boater to pay for the fisherman's rod in cash. The cost of the rod was a disputed \$250 and the boater was \$25 short, but it was enough to solve the disagreement. The fisherman returned to his campground and the ranger escorted the boater off the lake.

Was this a scene from Dewey Lake or Miami Vice?

According to now Resource Manager at Grayson Lake, Wayne Rigor, this event did happen. Of course he says this was during his young, macho days before he had verbal judo.

Fisherman catches eyeless fish in Guyandotte River

In the mid 80s, a man from Logan, W.Va. calls R.D. Bailey Lake one summer day to report he caught a

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Fact or Fiction

Continued from page 7

catfish with no eyes from the Guyandotte River. The man claimed he had fished the river all his life without seeing such a deformed fish before the dam was built. He demanded to know what the ranger was going to do about it since the government had obviously done something to the river.

What happened to the eyes?

It is hard to say. C.J. Hamilton was the ranger on the other end of the phone. After trying to reason with the man that he could be making a mistake, he told the man that if he caught an eyeless fish, he should take it to the local paper because they would love it.

Incidentally, Hamilton never saw an article in the paper.

Stolen automobile falls from sky at Yatesville

A stolen Trans Am was recently found in a remote area on Yatesville Lake project land with the tires collapsed underneath. There were no tracks, nor possible roadway surrounding the vehicle. The only disturbance to the area around the car was broken limbs from above. It is suspected that it, like the rattlesnakes at Yatesville, was dropped from midair.

How did it get there?

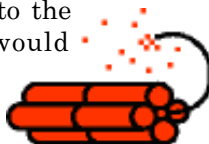
True story, but how the car got there is still unexplained? Resource Manager John McGinn says the only evidence is some broken vegetation above the vehicle. Even the law enforcement officials were stumped. The car was in such a primitive spot, that it could only be accessed by boat.



What made the whole incident a stranger sight, was when they could only remove the boat by loading it onto a pontoon boat and transporting it across the lake to the marina, McGinn said.

Boys use dynamite to catch fish at Grayson

Fifteen miles upstream of Grayson Lake, reports came in of boys throwing dynamite into a remote stream to catch stocked brown trout. When the explosive went into the water, the fish would raise to the surface making them available to catch.



What would the Fish and Wildlife service have to say about that?

True story as told by Resource Manager Wayne Rigor. The reports came in about three years ago, but ceased after the Corps encouraged the state Fish and Wildlife Service to do more patrolling in that area.

Bishop kisses trophy fish

During Grayson Lake's dam safety inspections when the project dewatered its stilling basin a lot of fish are left high and dry. Operations and Readiness' Technical Support Chief Arlie Bishop ends up scoping out the fish looking for a trophy. He is known to actually kiss a winner.

During these inspections, someone from the project staff will escort him to keep him focused on the job at hand.

What is it like kissing a fish?

According to Wayne Rigor you would have to ask Bishop since they have actual photos of him kissing a fish.

Tasmanian Tiger spotted at R.D. Bailey Lake

During the mid 90s a hunter, his coon dogs and hunting partner were bewildered by a strange animal call on R.D. Bailey Lake project land. The

dogs were on the animal's trail, but ran back to their masters after being startled by the creature. Likewise, the hunters decided not to pursue the animal.

Sometime thereafter a nearby resident spotted a mysterious animal with a doglike body and catlike face. Its description fit that of the extinct Tasmanian Tiger. The sightings were reported in the Beckley Register Herald newspaper and USA Today.

Does Taz really exist?

The story did appear in the USA Today and Beckley paper, but it was not true. Sportswriter John Blankenship for the Register Herald wrote the story as a parody around Halloween. While Blankenship was interviewing Ranger Aca Ramey for an outdoor article, the two got to talking about the tale. The writer thought it would make a great ghost story.

However, when it was published people throughout the town took it literally and flooded 9-1-1 with calls of possible sightings of the mystery beast. The tale became so serious people would not let their children outside. Ramey, who was mentioned in the article, was bombarded with phone calls from television stations and people with recordings of mysterious animal calls.

After USA Today published the article, National Geographic called the project office for details of the beast. After the whole story got blown out of proportion, the sports writer was forced to retract his story and do a reprint explaining his intentions with the article.

So goes the saying, you shouldn't believe everything you read.



Fire

Continued from page 6

and help the town out.”

The continuation of the fire to Slate Creek as Stokes suggests would have taken two other buildings and another seven buildings on Front Street were at risk if the fire moved in the other direction on Front Street.

The destroyed housed the businesses of Southern Pottery, Rich's Adventures, a mountain bike store, the Appalachian School of Law Bookstore, located in the same store as the bike shop and Susan's Golden Gifts. There were also two apartments

in these buildings.

The fire damaged buildings were scheduled to be taken and demolished by the Virginia Department of Transportation as part of its US Highway 460 project. Businesses would have had the option of relocating in the new business relocation site now being created by the Corps for the Town of Grundy as a part of the flood reduction program. The site is not scheduled for completion by the Corps and its contractor, Bush and Burchett, until 2003.

Blast

Continued from page 1

there could have been cracks from geology or from previous shots which might have fractured the strata, the blast may have been let off too close to the face, or the blasting holes may have been overloaded, according to Public Affairs Officer Steve Wright.

Whatever the problem, precautions have been put in place to prevent either of the three from happening again. As well Bush and Burchett replaced their safety officer and licensed blaster on the job and the Corps assigned a quality assurance person to oversee all blasts.

Safety Officer Helma German said the episode warranted a board of investigation under Army Regulation 385-40 because the cost of damages was more than \$100,000. “The Colonel calls the board and selects the members. In this case it is a three member panel.” The investigators are usually people who have working knowledge of the job at hand, but not directly involved. In this case the investigators are to determine what caused the awry blast.

Grundy Project Engineer Lisa Richardson said that before issuance of a construction contract such as this one, the contractor implements a quality control

program to ensure quality and compliance with the contract. Therefore, the contractor is responsible for all activities, including the damages from the blast.

According to Richardson, the contractor estimated damages to be in the \$250,000 range.

Witnesses, used to the blasting, described this one as a louder blast followed by flying rock. A Virginia Mountaineer newspaper article described some of the near misses as one man told of a boulder hitting the desk he was sitting at just minutes earlier. Everyone witnessing the scene, echoed that the town was fortunate no one was killed. Richardson said three of the four injured were treated and released while the fourth was a 70-year-old woman who was released a week later.

Richardson said the town was handling the incident well. “They have the desire that they be made whole from damages. They also want to believe and have surety that the project will proceed safely and swiftly from here on out.”

A more controlled blast resumed May 14 after the contractor followed additional directives from the Corps. Richardson said that blast was successful.

Administrative professionals day

Continued from page 7

administrative professional's role has evolved with the changing needs of technology and business.

According to EEO specialist Tracy Baker, the Huntington District alternates its formal program for administrative professionals every year with Take Your Sons and Daughters to Work Day. But although only formally recognized every other year, the event is still observed informally.

“Administrative Professionals Day is meant to acknowledge the worthiness and appreciation of the women and men occupying these roles,” Baker said. “It is often these individuals who keep the Corps of Engineers running like a well oiled machine.”

The first National Secretaries Week was June 1-7, 1952. It was changed in 1955 to the first full week of April, with the Wednesday being designated as National Secretaries Day. The name was changed in 1981 to Professional Secretaries Week, and again in 2000 to Administrative Professionals Week to reflect the expanding responsibilities and wide ranging job titles of administrative support today.



Photo by Peggy Noel

Kathy Patrick and others listen to Col. John Rivenburgh as he expresses gratitude to these professionals.

EC prepares for gradual loss of baby boomers

Corps sends its own headhunters to recruit next generation

By ELIZABETH SLAGEL
Public Affairs

As 24 percent of Engineering and Construction's workforce will be retirement eligible in the next five years, a red alert sounded for the organization as it prepares for years-worth of institutional knowledge to literally walk out the door.

However, the Engineering and Construction Division is not taking the possibility lightly as a district recruitment initiative is taking off after two years in the making. Future engineer needs are being projected and a team of Corps headhunters are actively circulating college campuses in search of the best and brightest engineer students for these positions.

"The quality of candidates is like none we've ever seen," Coy Miller, chief of Design Branch, said of some recently hired positions. We're seeing students with 3.99 GPA's from esteemed schools.

One such student turned Corps structural engineer is Ohio State University master's degree student Michael Likavec recruited by Dave Conley. A cum laude graduate who went to school primarily on scholarships said he hadn't considered the Corps of Engineers until he heard Dave Conley's presentation before the campus chapter of the American Society of Civil Engineers.

Following that introduction, a rush of students put resumes in for a 30-minute campus interview with Conley. Likavec was one and later visited Huntington to see what the district was like in person. He hadn't given much thought as to where he

would begin his career. "All I knew was I couldn't work for my Dad's company (Burgess and Niple) because of a no family rule. That's okay. I don't think he would have liked working for me," he said with a smile.

However, the Corps wasn't Likavec's only option. He had turned down a job in Houston and one in Cincinnati that does a lot of work for Wright Patterson Air Force Base. Believe it or not, the selling point for Likavec was Huntington is a small town.

It is selling points like these that Conley and other recruiters key in on when trying to interest promising engineers. "We try to portray an accurate picture so when they are here, they see it for what it is," Conley said.

Among the most common selling points are large public works projects, the variety of engineer work, broad-based training and promotion opportunities.

Of course what is typically most attractive for new grads is pay and benefits, which doesn't always make the Corps look the most appealing when compared with the private sector. However, Conley and his team member Shawn Carter are able to share the

disadvantages that come with the higher salary as they can speak from their own experiences of 50-60 hour work weeks and the redundant private sector work.

"I tell them I have hobbies now, but didn't have them when I worked for private industry. I used to design ponds for coal companies. I probably designed 3,000 ponds and became very good at it." However, designing ponds was probably all Conley would ever get to do because it was his specialty and the better he got at it, the more money he made for the company.

Today Conley tells students of creative projects he gets to design such as floating walls at Greenup or mega locks such as Soo Locks for Detroit District.

"Most engineer students don't have a clue as to what we do. I first have to explain the Army connection and the fact that we are a civilian organization," Conley added. "They seem to be most interested in cutting-edge stuff."

While recruiters are doing their part, one downside to the initiative is the government's long, rigorous hiring process. Engineering and

"Most engineer students don't have a clue as to what we do. I first have to explain the Army connection and the fact that we are a civilian organization."

Dave Conley, Engineer Recruiter

Constructions Training manager Carol Chaffin said, "Once we get a recruit in the system and are able to make them an offer, they have already taken a job somewhere else."

Combine this with all the confusing forms prospective recruits are asked to fill out and the initial interest may be lost, she added.

Likavec said he probably wouldn't have even gone through the application process if it hadn't been for Conley's help. "The application process was a pain. You pull the application off the web and you're just like what do I do with this?"

However, Human Resources Mark Lycan is familiarizing EC with a new program called the Federal Career Intern Program just placed on the Federal Register in late 2000. This program allows an engineer position to be filled quickly bypassing the normal CPOC hiring route. In theory, a recruiter could interview a student, report back to management and that person could be on board in a matter of weeks.

The one condition is the new employee is hired the same as a student and is on a two-year probation period. At the end of the term, they can be converted noncompetitively or terminated.

The reason for the rush is the rapidly rising need to get bright engineers into the organization and trained before some of the experienced engineers decide to leave. The other reason is to be competitive with the private sector who can basically hire on the spot.

Lycan added, "the

FCIP is not open to any occupational areas. It is largely only available in the engineering discipline. It doesn't provide for hiring in any professional series that is covered by the Administrative Careers with America."

Consequently Huntington is primarily using the FCIP in its recruitment initiative for Engineering and Construction Division.

Al Branch, chief of Engineering and Construction Division said, "One of the most important responsibilities we have as senior leaders is to build the USACE team of tomorrow. They will be the future ... the staff engineers, the technical specialists, the managers and the leaders of tomorrow. Our recruits staff not only the ranks of EC, but also go on to other key positions

throughout LRH and LRD. We seek to recruit, train and retain the best and brightest to fill these roles as they will face the challenges, accomplish the mission and shape the destiny of USACE for decades to come.

Ohio State recruiter Dave Conley agreed, "The better we can recruit, the healthier and stronger organization we can create which in turn increases our longevity."

Recruiting team leaders are Tammy Fudge for Marshall and WVU, Todd Jennings for Virginia Tech, Lisa Humphreys for WVIT, Tammy Riffle for UK, Dave Conley for OSU, Mark Hammond for OU, Tracy Baker for Wilberforce and Central State University and Dale Smith for maintenance coops for lock projects and Terry Noble for civil engineer technicians.



Photo by Elizabeth Slagel

Ohio State University Cum Laude graduate Michael Likavec is one of Engineering and Construction's first recruits. The structural engineer says it is taking him a while to get used to the title since most beginning engineers are called engineers in training before reaching the formal title. He turned down two other job offers to come to Huntington District.

Young fisherman take to water at Dewey

By **STONNEY BURKE**
Ranger, Dewey Lake

The Corps and other sponsors participated in the Ninth Annual Kids Day in the Park Saturday, April 27 at Archer Park, in Prestonsburg, Ky.

The following events were free to all children nine and under: hot shot basketball, sack race, kick ball, saucer toss, football toss, 50-yard dash, one of the most famous events the big wheel race, added attractions included: free pony rides, snack bags, ice cream, pepsi, balloons, face painting, and petting zoo. The day ended with a free concert by The Wulfe Brothers. Trophies were given to first, second and third place in each event by age group.

The following agencies participated

in this event; Kentucky State Police, Floyd County Sheriffs Department with Dare Bear, Kentucky Department of Fish & Wildlife, Big Sandy RECC, Floyd County Schools Transportation Department, City of Prestonsburg Police and Fire Department, Respond Ambulance Service, Food City, WMDJ Radio Station, University of Kentucky Medical Center

Helicopter, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers with Safety Squirrel, Kerns Bakery, Lance Potato Chips Inc., and Pepsi Bottling Company.



Photo by Stonney Burke

Safety Squirrel, otherwise known as volunteer Matt Triplett, entertains children at the Kids Dishing Day.

Friends sweep Dewey Lake

By **SHIRLA WELLS**
Park Ranger, Dewey Lake

The Friends of Dewey Lake, the Corps and Jenny Wiley State Resort Park (JWSP) hosted the fifth Operation Clean Sweep April 20. It was a tremendous success with over 100 volunteers collecting and disposing of

about 300 bags of trash from the lake and the surrounding area.

Dr. Shiber's classes from Prestonsburg Community College and many dedicated individuals showed up Saturday morning to begin collecting the garbage. Several volunteer prizes were awarded including a Corps of Engineers shelter rental, pontoon rentals, free meals at May Lodge and free golf games at JWSP.

This is an annual event held in April of each year as close to Environmental Day as possible. Everyone is welcome to participate whether you are part of a group or organization or an interested individual.



Photo by Duanne Henrickson

Dr. Shiber's class at German Bridge has long been a willing participant in the annual cleanups.

Paintsville community collects trash at lake

Six community groups from the Paintsville area helped collect seven and a half tons of garbage at this year's lake cleanup, otherwise known as Take Pride in America Program.

Maintenance Leader Karen Cantrell began the cleanup back in 1986. Since then some 70 tons of trash have been removed from the lake area, according to Resource Manager Bob Beverley.

Ranger David Jackson coordinated this year's event.

Lights camera action

Do you have your 30-second commercial



Mark Kessinger
Project Manager
Programs and Project
Management

I'm a Project Manager in Planning, Programs and Project Management Division. As a Project Manager I'm responsible for the overall management, coordination and execution of my projects.

I'm managing several exciting projects. One involves a study to restore the Monday Creek Watershed near Athens, Ohio. The Monday Creek Watershed covers over 74,000 acres of which about half is part of the Wayne National Forest. Monday Creek has been severely damaged from acid mine drainage to the point

that fish cannot live in parts of the stream. This project is very important to our region because there are hundreds of streams in our area with acid mine drainage problems similar to Monday Creek. What we learn from this study will help us solve similar problems in other watersheds.

I'm also managing a Section 202 flood proofing study along the Levisa Fork in Pike County, Kentucky. With a potential to elevate over 2000 structures out of the floodplain, construct two floodwalls around Pikeville and Coal Run, and build ringwalls (miniature floodwalls) around 10-12 schools, this project is currently the largest Section 202 project in the Corps. With an estimated construction cost between \$400 - \$500 million, if implemented it will be the largest project ever in the Huntington District.

I'm also the program manager for all of the work the Corps does for the Department of Energy's National Energy Technology Laboratory. I've got to do some great work from coast to coast under this program. For example, I've been a member of a team

that dismantled an old nuclear reactor in Hanford, Washington, as well as a member of a team that improved the utility usage of a Naval Surface Warfare Center in Indian Head, Maryland.

Because the Huntington District Office is located in a small town in a small state, many people underestimate what we do. Most don't realize that we oversee the largest inland waterway port in the U.S., operate more flood control dams than any other Corps district, and manage navigation on the largest stretch of the Ohio River. We've also built a state-of-the-art fish hatchery for West Virginia, completed a large dormitory for the Federal Bureau of Prisons, built bike trails in the Monongahela National Forest, worked on dismantling NASA's only nuclear reactor, and constructed waterfront parks in Huntington and Charleston.

The Huntington District is an excellent place to work because we have a lot of great people and we are doing exciting and challenging things. We're not just about locks and dams anymore!



Greg Lovins
Payroll Customer Service
Representative
Resource Management

I work for the US Army Corps of Engineers. I do the payroll for 930 people. I am called the "Payroll Customer Service Representative." My job is to service the employees within Huntington District and field office with payroll problems and answers and resolve any problems that occur for any employees. I also ensure that all employees get paid. I also maintain the training program within the Resource Management Office and collect monies from outside the agency for deposit in the district's account. I currently serve as a member of the disability committee.

Picnic planned

Friday, June 14

- Susan Joy and her husband are sponsoring a slow bike race. The course will be about 40 feet long and the rider who goes the slowest is the winner. As well, races for kids and adults are planned. The prize for the kids ages 7-14 will be a new 20 inch bike. There will also be other small prizes. If interested, bring bikes.

Huntington District People

Condolences

- To Beverly Payne and her family on the loss of her son Chris. He passed away April 26.

Published

- Tim Fudge was published in "International Dredging Review" after giving a presentation on the Corps' dredging program.

- A photo of Pam Hall appeared in the "Resources Magazine" trade publication for divers. She is photographed during her training in Key West, FL.



Congratulations

- To Emily Riggs, daughter of Retiree Lance Riggs, for her soccer success at Cabell Midland High School as goalkeeper and four-year letter winner. She will continue her soccer career at Concord College. Her decision appeared in a March 25 article for the Herald Dispatch.



- To the last class of leadership interns upon graduation. They are front: Marcia Thompson, Melissa Hall, Peggy Noel, Sharon Hay, Sharanna Romans, Pedro Luciana, Scott Kinzel; back: Toby Wood, Jim Nolen, David Sullivan, Ron Ray and Joe Koloziej.

- To Rebecca Howell, daughter of Bonnie Howell, for being a National Award Winner in Mathematics and English that recognizes fewer than 10 percent of all high school students. Rebecca is an eighth grade student at Johnson County Middle School in Paintsville, Ky.

Assembling

- Winfield Locks and Dam project retirees will be meeting monthly for breakfast at Bob Evans Restaurant in Teays Valley, I-64 exit at Winfield, near the Big Bear store. They meet the first Tuesday of each month at 9 a.m. All retirees are welcome to join.

New Arrival

- Rebecca Bryant gave birth to a boy May 7. Braxton David weighed eight pounds and one ounce and was 21 inches long.

Something in the water?



Photos by Elizabeth Slagel

GSA has not ordered a water advisory, but people are wondering if there is something in it. Seven women are expecting in the Huntington District Office building. They are from left Kelly Adkins (pregnant with a boy), Susan Fields (girl), Neisha Keiling (boy), Natalie McKinley (boy), Rebecca Bryant (boy), Jeanie Wilson (girl) and Joan St. Clair (a surprise).

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Huntington Dist. Corps of Engrs
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